

# From reluctant to relentless

## Weatherford's Burd eyes the top of the podium in '26

David Topolewski  
WDN Managing Editor

When Lukas Burd first took to the wrestling mat at five years old, he wasn't exactly sold on the sport.

How things have changed.

Burd, a senior wrestler for the Weatherford Eagles in the 175-pound division, is coming off a fourth-place finish at the OSSAA Class 4A State Wrestling Meet a year ago and currently owns a 23-4 record this season.

He's also making his presence felt on the tournament circuit.

Of the four tournaments Weatherford has competed in this season, Burd has been crowned champion twice — at the Max Dippel Invitational

in Weatherford and at Blanchard. He finished fourth at the Cushing Tournament and placed second last weekend at Kingfisher.

It's been an impressive climb for Lukas when considering his early disinterest in the sport — something his father, Matt Burd, recalls vividly.

"He didn't really love it at first. So when he was seven, we took one year off," Matt said. "The next year, his little brother Max started wrestling with him. From then on, we have been on the mats."

Burd's rise becomes even more inspirational when his early struggles in the sport are taken into account as success didn't come early for Lukas.

Matt said Lukas was never a

state placer in youth wrestling and didn't come particularly close to placing at the junior high state level, despite winning matches along the way.

The turning point came during the spring of his sophomore year, when Lukas began competing in freestyle wrestling.

"He learned to have fun and relax when he was wrestling," Matt said. "Lukas' success over the last two years is a testament to perseverance, hard work and mental toughness."

As Weatherford's lone returning state placer — and one of just three returners who qualified for state last season

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Jami Weaver

**Weatherford's 175-pound wrestler Lukas Burd has his arm raised after securing a win against Hinton Tuesday.**



Daniel Ediger/WDN

**Weatherford's Talyn Payne takes the floor during pregame introductions at a Lady Eagles' home contest earlier this year.**

# Sharpening of the Lady Eagles' Talyn

## Senior heating up from field

David Topolewski  
WDN Managing Editor

Talyn Payne knew the ball would eventually find the basket.

The senior sharpshooter was proven right—and it truly showed Friday night.

Payne's shooting was integral during Weatherford's two wins last week, accounting for eight made 3-pointers across both games and totaling 30 points.

While her consistency has been streaky at times through the first 13 games of the season, Payne said the key has been never abandoning her approach.

"What has helped in the last couple of games was just not giving up," Payne said. "At some point they have to fall."

More importantly, Payne said she leaned on her teammates when shots weren't falling.

"It takes the team for me to be able to score," Payne said. "They encourage me even when things aren't hitting."

Lady Eagles' coach Kali Haworth called Payne "an excellent leader" and added her commitment to her approach at shooting never wavered.

"Even when her shots weren't falling early in the season, she continued to trust in her mechanics as a shooter," Haworth said. "She stayed confident and her consistency has lead to results over time."

**An OT Thriller**  
Payne's poise was clear during

Weatherford's dramatic 65-60 overtime win Friday against the OKC Knights in Midwest City. She finished with 13 points, knocking down two 3-pointers, with seven of her points coming in the extra period.

Weatherford trailed 21-14 midway through the second quarter against the Knights before battling back to take a 24-24 tie into intermission.

The challenge was far different from the Lady Eagles' 58-35 win the second game of the season against OKC, which came on Weatherford's home floor. This time, a small gym and a rowdy environment tested Weatherford's resolve.

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David Topolewski/WDN

**Hydro-Eakly senior Peyton Lierle, No. 13, presents Bobcats' coach Oran Laub, center, with a banner commemorating the coach's 100th win after the Bobcats defeated Geary Tuesday night. See the full story and more from Hydro-Eakly's week of basketball on Page 6.**

# Reaching for the stars

## WHS students learn from retired NASA astronaut

Kyra Huckabay  
WDN City Editor

Aviation students at Weatherford High School got an out-of-this-world lesson this week when retired NASA astronaut Cady Coleman shared stories from her two decades of service among the stars.

Coleman, a chemist and former Air Force colonel, is not only a veteran of two Space Shuttle missions but also spent nearly six

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Kyra Huckabay/WDN

**Retired NASA astronaut Cady Coleman, left, visits Weatherford High School last Wednesday and meets student Kaycee Clem.**